

REMARKS

Claims 2, 4, 5 and 7-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3 and 6 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 11 are amended. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants request acknowledgement of receipt and consideration of the references submitted on December 16, 2005 Information Disclosure Statement.

II. Allowed/Allowable Subject Matter

The allowance of claim 11, as well as the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 4, 5 and 7-10 is appreciated. The allowable claims being in condition for allowance if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of their base claims and any intervening claims. As the appropriate allowable claims are so amended, Applicants submit that all pending subject matter is now in condition for allowance.

III. Claims Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,977,508 to Tanaka et al. (Tanaka) in view of U.S. Patent 4,435,987 to Sugimoto and U.S. Patent 3,887,855 to Klimo; claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is unpatentable over Tanaka, Sugimoto and Klimo and further in view of U.S. Patent 4,454,212 to Mashino; and claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is unpatentable over Tanaka, Sugimoto and

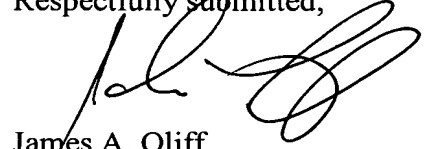
Klimo and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,456,048 to Taniguchi et al. (Taniguchi). As each of claims 1, 3 and 6 is cancelled, the rejection of each of those claims is moot.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2, 4, 5 and 7-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

John W. Fitzpatrick
Registration No.

JAO:JWF/lbg

Attachment:
Amendment Transmittal

Date: December 28, 2005

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
--